

Xavier (Frank X.) Putz House
208 14th Street
Fourth Ward Neighborhood
Altoona
Blair County
Pennsylvania

HABS No. PA-5864

HABS
PA,
7-ALTO,
71-

PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
Washington, D.C. 20013-7127

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

XAVIER (FRANK X.) PUTZ HOUSE

HABS
PA.
7-ALTO,
71 -

HABS No. PA-5864

Location: 208 14th Street

Date of Erection: 1891

Description: This small, two-and-one-half-story house presents a side-gable facade to the street but has its entrance in the wider gable end. Located at the alley on the rear of a corner property, it is oriented toward the larger house at the avenue front. The presence of a narrow, closed-in window on the right edge of the street face suggests that the entrance may have been moved.

The shape of this house is unusual, as the first floor is slightly wider than the second. This extra space is topped by a short gabled roof that runs along the entrance facade, wrapping around to the street side for part of that expanse. Wide aluminum siding and matching striped awnings obscure original window patterns. Sliding picture windows have been added in the first floor; there are two windows in the front and three in the side at second-floor level. The house has a central enclosed chimney.

History: The Putz House is an example of a number of Fourth Ward buildings converted over their history to serve different functions. When Michael M. Kimmel purchased a 50' x 120' lot on the corner of 2nd Avenue from John A. Wright in May 1889 it cost only \$900. When Xavier Putz purchased the lot in July of the following year, a house was located at the avenue front and the price rose to \$2,775. In 1900 Francis X. Putz ran a meat market at 1808 4th Ave. and at this address, listing 1808 4th Ave. as his home. When Mary Ludwig purchased the property in July 1902, shortly after Putz's death, it was described as containing "a two story frame dwelling house on the corner of 2nd Avenue and Fourteenth street and also a single story frame house on the corner of the alley used as a butcher shop."

George Pielmeier acquired the property in January 1905, adding his wife Cricentia to the deed in 1922. Sanborn maps and the 1902 deed of sale contradict each other as to whether this was originally a one- or two-story structure. It was Pielmeier who converted the house, perhaps adding the second floor, if it was not already present as maps indicate. His first tax assessment for the property in 1906 reads "and shop in rear." Pielmeier's 1907 taxes, however, are for a house at 1330 2nd Ave. and another at 208 14th St. George Pielmeier, a blacksmith for the PRR, and Crissie Pielmeier lived at 1330 2nd Ave. through 1925, but moved into the alley house by 1930.

As a widower in April 1947, Pielmeier split the property and transferred the 25' x 47' lot, 208 14th St., to Herman Lang, a foreman, and his wife Anna Marie; and he sold 1330 2nd Ave. to other relatives. The Langs lived here in 1948, but sold the property to Charles R. and Gertrude T. Plummer in 1955 for \$4,500. Gertrude died in 1966; in 1967 Charles had remarried to Grace A. Plummer. He continued to live here during his retirement from his job as a machinist for the PRR. Grace Plummer transferred the property to their children in 1987.

Sources: Maps: 1882, 1894, 1909. Deed books: 74/399, 81/255, 137/196, 155/272, 560/559, 712/512, 862/470, 1143/966. City directories. Tax assessment records.

Project Information: This report was part of a larger project to document the city of Altoona, Pennsylvania. The project was undertaken by the Historic American Buildings Survey/Historic American Engineering Record (HABS/HAER), Robert Kapsch, chief, at the request of America's Industrial Heritage Project (AIHP), Randy Cooley, director. Overviews of the history of the city (HABS No. PA-5784) and the fourth ward neighborhood (HABS No. PA-5786) provide context for these buildings as well as a comprehensive list of sources. See also additional HABS reports on buildings in the city and other neighborhoods.

This report was prepared by Susan Garfinkel in the summer of 1989 under the supervision of HABS senior historian Alison K. Hoagland and Kim E. Wallace, supervisory historian. Garfinkel's and other project historians' work was published as Railroad City: Four Historic Neighborhoods in Altoona, Pennsylvania (Washington, D.C.: HABS/HAER, National Park Service, 1990), edited by Kim E. Wallace, supervisory historian, and Sara Amy Leach, HABS historian.